

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROPOSED BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT: *TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD FOR SEDIMENT IN THE TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED, PLACER, NEVADA AND SIERRA COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA*

Project Description

The *TMDL for Sediment in the Truckee River watershed* will provide a written, quantitative assessment of sediment-related water quality impacts and contributing sources. It will identify numeric targets to interpret the narrative water quality objectives for sediment, specify the maximum sediment load the California portion of the Truckee River can assimilate and still protect beneficial uses, and allocate pollutant loads among sources in the watersheds. The TMDL will include an implementation plan to reduce sediment loading in the Truckee River.

California Water Code (CWC) Section 13242 requires that implementation plans be incorporated into the Basin Plan when the Water Board adopts TMDLs. The implementation plan must include (1) a description of the nature of actions necessary to achieve the water quality objectives, (2) a time schedule for the actions to be taken, and (3) a description of the monitoring and surveillance needed to determine progress in meeting the numeric targets and attaining water quality objectives.

The Water Board cannot specify the design, location, type, or particular manner of compliance with TMDL implementation plans (CWC Section 13360). It can require dischargers to implement sediment and erosion controls such as BMPs necessary to attain the water quality standards through its regulatory authority. Typical implementation actions for sediment TMDLs may include:

- Slope stabilization (revegetation, mulching, re-contouring, etc)
- Dirt road rehabilitation or decommissioning
- Storm water runoff controls (infiltration basins, etc)
- Road sand reclamation
- In-stream restoration
- Riparian revegetation
- Construction site BMPs

Purpose and Need

This amendment is necessary to fulfill requirements of the Clean Water Act and to protect beneficial uses in the Truckee River watershed from excess sediment affecting water quality. Sediment is an important, naturally occurring component of healthy streams and rivers that benefits many elements of the biologic community. However, an excessive amount of sediment can have adverse

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effects on in-stream aquatic communities and recreational and municipal beneficial uses.

In the 1992 statewide Water Quality Assessment, the Truckee River was classified as "impaired" and placed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list for sedimentation. The Clean Water Act requires states to develop and implement TMDLs to address impairments in listed waters.

Review of available monitoring information, recent watershed studies and current and legacy land use issues indicate that the Truckee River is at or very near the maximum range of its sediment carrying capacity. The purpose of the TMDL is to provide a plan to control sediment discharges and ultimately attain water quality objectives for sediment in the Truckee River watershed.

INITIAL EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The Basin Plan amendment will not by itself require the implementation of any specific project, and the Water Board will not directly undertake any actions that could physically change the environment. Therefore, the environmental analysis is at a program level and not at a project level. Adopting the proposed Basin Plan amendment could indirectly result in impacts to the environment as local entities within the watershed implement specific projects to satisfy the requirements of the Basin Plan amendment. The Regional Board is required by CEQA to analyze impacts and mitigation measures that are a reasonably foreseeable consequence of adopting the Basin Plan amendment.

The following draft environmental checklist provides Water Board staff's initial evaluation of potential environmental impacts that could occur as an indirect result of the proposed amendments. Following the checklist is a discussion of potential mitigation measures for any impact checked "potentially significant," "less than significant with mitigation incorporation" or "less than significant."

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited				X

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to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result				X

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in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?				
III. AIR QUALITY -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?				X
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				X
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat		X		

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modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?		X		
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?		X		
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan,				X

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Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5?		X		
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5?		X		
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?		X		
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		X		
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a				X

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known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv) Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?		X		
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?		X		
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				X
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X

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b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X

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h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				X
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?		X		
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?		X		
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner				X

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which would result in flooding on- or off-site?				
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?				X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?		X		
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to				X

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the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X
X. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				X
XI. NOISE: Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				X
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project				X

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vicinity above levels existing without the project?				
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?		X		
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING - - Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing				X

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elsewhere?				
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?				X
Police protection?				X
Schools?				X
Parks?				X
Other public facilities?				X
XIV. RECREATION --				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X

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XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC - - Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?				X
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				X
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				X
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus				X

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turnouts, bicycle racks)?				
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?		X		
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?				X

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f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs?				X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X
XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE --				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?		X		
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will				X

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cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				

Discussion of Mitigation for Potential Impacts

IV. Biological Resources

a-b) The Basin Plan amendment is intended to benefit biological resources, including wildlife and rare and endangered species. Local entities proposing projects would conduct environmental review and identify necessary mitigation measures as needed to protect habitats, special-status species, or sensitive communities.

c) If, pursuant to requirements derived from the proposed Basin Plan amendment, specific projects were to be proposed involving construction or earthmoving activities that could adversely affect wetlands, then local entities should obtain necessary permits and incorporate necessary mitigation measures through their environmental reviews.

d) Project proponents would ensure that mitigation measures are implemented, such as avoiding construction during the breeding season, avoiding sensitive habitat areas, and minimizing disturbances.

V. Cultural Resources

a-d) If necessary to protect historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources, local entities would require mitigation through their environmental reviews.

VI. Geology and Soils

b) It is not anticipated that there would be any substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil resulting from projects proposed by dischargers complying with the Basin Plan amendment. The intent of the Basin Plan amendment is to provide long term decreases in soil erosion and loss of topsoil in order to benefit the beneficial uses of the Truckee River and Gray Creek. However, as dischargers propose

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projects in order to comply with the Basin Plan amendment, their project design should address measures to mitigate temporary erosion.

c) Local entities proposing projects to comply with requirements derived from the Basin Plan amendment should design their project and propose mitigation measures as necessary to minimize any potential for landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

VIII. Hydrology and Water Quality

a) The project would amend the Basin Plan, which articulates applicable water quality standards. Future projects resulting from the amendment should be designed to meet all applicable water quality standards and permit requirements. Future project proponents should incorporate mitigation measures as deemed necessary during their project reviews.

c) Earthmoving projects proposed to meet the proposed Basin Plan amendment targets would be designed to reduce overall soil erosion. Project proponents should ensure that mitigation measures are implemented, such as dust suppression (e.g., by spraying water), use of erosion control best management practices, and proper construction site management. In addition, construction projects over one acre in size would require a general construction National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and implementation of a storm water pollution prevention plan.

f) As local entities propose implementation projects, they should obtain the necessary permits and propose project specific mitigation measures such as erosion control and construction site best management practices (BMPs) in order to comply with CEQA requirements.

XI. Noise

d) If necessary, local entities could require that noise reduction mitigation measures be implemented, such as restricting the hours of noise-generating operations.

XVI. Utilities and Service

c) In order to comply with the Basin Plan amendments, local dischargers may propose constructing new or expanded storm water drainage facilities. At the time of project design and environmental review, the responsible discharger should propose mitigations for any potentially significant environmental effects resulting from this type of activity.

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XVII. Mandatory Findings of Significance

a) As specific implementation proposals are developed and proposed, project proponents should undertake environmental review and identify specific environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation measures. In cases where potential impacts could be significant, project proponents should adopt mitigation measures to ensure that possible impacts would be less than significant.